

Videographer, Simonkr

Jan 2, 2020 | Alwyn Gosford

[AG]: You live and work in Ljubljana, how would you describe Slovenia to someone who has never been there?

[S]: Green all over. Clear blue sky. Fresh air. Snow in winter, hot sun in summer. You can get from the top of our highest mountain to the clear waters of Adriatic Sea in just one day. 2 million people and 212 municipalities in the area of roughly 20000 km², which is just about double the size of Yellowstone National Park. In short... everyone loves Slovenia. It is a paradise to live in.

[AG]: Could you tell me a bit about your background? How did you get started in filmmaking? Did you always know it was what you wanted to do?

[S]: My interest in videography began early. At the age of 14 I signed up for a video class at school. When the local TV station representative came to us and asked if any of us would like to work for them, I immediately applied. I began filming content for their daily programming and continued working full-time through college as a director of many live broadcasts. I was also hired to do wedding videos and cover other family events. I never imagined the scale of production we do today or something as wonderful as stock footage business exists.

[AG]: Do you have any favorite artists/photographers/filmmakers that have had an impact on your work?

[S]: Steven Spielberg, Ridley Scott, George Lucas, James Cameron, and Roger Deakins. They all produce visual perfection in all areas and push productions to the edge of technology and human imagination.

[AG]: It seems that you can turn your hand to any kind of subject, but do you have something that you think of as signature SimonKR? What would you say is a trademark treatment?

[S]: Simonkr is supposed to be the best in sports. I think some signature shots are the ones in super slow motion with specific rolling handheld movement, low angle, wide lens. That is something that's most of the time immediately correlated to Simonkr.

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[AG]: What has been your favorite shoot, if you can pick one, and why?

[S]: This is a hard one to answer. I would pick a small shoot with a small team, 2 crew members and a biker. We took a Phantom 4K Flex in our hands and ran over the muddy water behind the biker to capture all that raw power of the biker vs nature. We got some wonderful shots, it was a relaxing shoot and there was so much fun (and mud) in every take.

[AG]: Is there an image or clip that stands out to you in your own archive as a moment that was extra challenging to capture or feels more special than the rest?

[S]: One is from the shoot I was just describing, the other one is from the “Robin Hood” shoot, inspired by Ridley Scot. It’s a close up, slow-motion shot of Robin releasing the arrow.

[AG]: You have a team that helps you put shoots together, can you talk about how you built that team and how you work together to produce the different size projects that you do?

[S]: My team is divided into production departments (props, styling, location, casting, grip, light, camera, DIT, etc). Depending on the size of the project, departments can consist of just 1 person for small projects or many, many, many of them for large or XL projects. In our recent Basketball shoot, our biggest project so far, we had 307 crew members, which was gigantic task for us to manage. But the workflow is always the same. We start with the shot list, then discuss tasks, ideas, and opinions with team leaders and visit locations, dive into the subject areas of the shoot to the micro details level, develop clear instructions to each of the departments and start intensive preproduction. It takes about 2-3 weeks for small productions and about 6 months intensive work for something like the basketball shoot. We use project management software, but one-to-one discussion is still the king of all communications.

[AG]: Methodical – is there still room for surprises in the moment?

[S]: Always. You can’t avoid it.

[AG]: What’s the most important mistake you’ve made while filming and how did it change what you did moving forward?

[S]: We plan so much in detail everything we do, but often what looks brilliant on paper, turns out into a nightmare on set. You still need to be prepared, but we try to leave some space for the unexpected to happen and develop different strategies to embrace those beautiful unexpected pearls.

[AG]: Do you have any particular themes or props that you like to revisit?

[S]: “Live coverage”. Doing shoots that are more events than shoots, like shooting Basketball, F1 Racing, Live Music, or Football. We create fully released events and then act as a broadcaster with multiple cameras on set, no “action! / cut!”. We capture real, live, authentic moments as opposed to the normal “film” production, when you repeat an action 25 times to get the shot. This is a real challenge for me.

[AG]: As someone who is constantly shooting, where are you currently drawing inspiration from? How do you stay motivated and inspired?

[S]: Well, there is an endless line of challenges in every single topic you can imagine. Every shot has challenges in light setup, lens choice, direction, etc. You are challenged all the time when you are on set. We want to push the stock footage boundaries further and further.

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[AG]: How has your work evolved since you began? Have you noticed any visual or stylistic shifts in your approach or the kinds of subjects you shoot since you first started?

[S]: My wife and I began in 2006 with an HDV camcorder, tripod, and sun bouncer, shooting beautiful Slovenia landscape, ducks in the pond, and ourselves running, skiing, handshaking, dating, traveling, you name it. We soon realized we needed another sun bouncer, and tracks, and a crane, and... and... and... and the list has never stopped. Working closely with Getty Images' creative support team, we developed other skills like visual storytelling, casting, styling, and visual grammar. We came to understand stock much more from the concept side of it and are still learning about how stock content interacts with social changes in the world. We moved from ducks in the pond to industry, healthcare, business, and sports related subjects. We try to find deeper concepts in everything we shoot today.

[AG]: What would you say to people coming up through the ranks to be a professional videographer?

[S]: Find your passion, your niche, something you are good at in your own life and explore it visually. Go crazy, push yourself, never stop. Plan, shoot, edit, upload, repeat.

[AG]: When you're resting and relaxing from filmmaking, how do you like to spend your time?

[S]: Family first. We all love the Adriatic Sea, mountains, being active, skiing, hiking... or just going out somewhere for those few moments that we have together.

[AG]: What is next in the cards for you?

[S]: Besides regular small and medium sized shoots we have 2 big projects planned for 2020, both sports oriented. Fingers crossed!